

## **Aging with Developmental Disabilities Position Statement**

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities supports the position that all people aging with disabilities should be fully included in their communities. Many people with developmental disabilities are supported throughout their lives by family caregivers. The number of older adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities is expected to triple over the next twenty years and the majority of Texans waiting for services have a primary caregiver who is between 31 and 59 years of age.<sup>1</sup> As people with developmental disabilities and their caregivers age, they have the right to continue to live in the community and exercise control over their own lives. All individuals face challenges caused by the aging process and need flexible services and supports equipped to meet their changing needs.

Therefore, the Council supports the position that Texas has a responsibility to ensure that the state's long-term services and supports system can meet the needs of older Texans with disabilities and their aging family caregivers by:

- Ensuring that services and supports are available and flexible enough to allow each aging individual to remain in their home and community and exercise control over their own lives;
- Building expertise among service providers to assist people with developmental disabilities who are aging and their family caregivers in actively planning for their future long-term services and supports needs;
- Increasing capacity for respite services for aging caregivers of people with developmental disabilities;
- Including people representing the disability community on any committee developing or reviewing initiatives and policies related to aging;
- Assisting people to establish a comprehensive retirement plan to encompass any or all of the following concerns:
  - Health care,
  - Legal issues,
  - Advance directives,
  - Leisure time,
  - Counseling,
  - Long-term services and supports plan,
  - Retirement and/or employment,
  - Money,

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<sup>1</sup>Texas Biennial Disability Report, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, 2010.

- Guardianship/alternatives to guardianship,
- Self-advocacy,
- Housing,
- Transportation.

Texas leads the nation in promoting independence of people with disabilities and can continue to set the standard as its population ages.

Approved May 6, 2016